



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/551,363	09/28/2005	Earl C. Downey	01630-21317.PCT.US	3075
20551	7590	01/13/2009	EXAMINER	
THORPE NORTH & WESTERN, LLP. P.O. Box 1219 SANDY, UT 84091-1219			HORNINGER, JENNIFER LEA	
ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER			
			3734	
MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE			
01/13/2009			PAPER	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/551,363	Applicant(s) DOWNEY, EARL C.
	Examiner JENNIFER L. HORNBERGER	Art Unit 3734

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - If no period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED. (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 03 October 2008.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
 6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

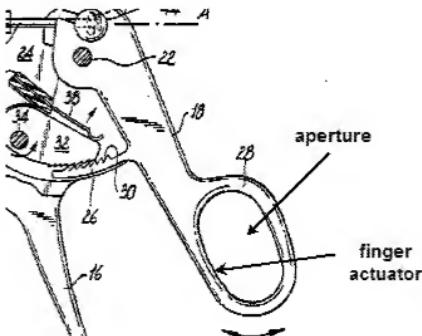
1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 1-4, 6, 9-14, and 16-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Cuny (US 5626608).

Regarding claim 1, Cuny et al. disclose a surgical device, comprising: an ergonomic handle (16) having an aperture accessible by a single finger of a user, and a finger actuator (the inside surface of the aperture on which pressure is applied to actuate movement; see figure below) accessible through the aperture, the finger actuator being sized and shaped to receive a single finger of a user; an elongated tubular portion (14) extending from the ergonomic handle and having a longitudinal axis; and a rod (42) functionally disposed within the tubular portion along the longitudinal axis, the rod being coupled proximally to the finger actuator and configured to be coupled distally to a functional end (46, 48).



Regarding claim 2, Cuny et al. disclose a functional end (46, 48) coupled to a distal end of the rod, such that bidirectional pressure applied by the single finger to the finger actuator along the longitudinal axis manipulates the functional end in a bidirectional manner in a common direction to the bidirectional pressure (col. 5, ln. 65 -col. 6, ln. 6).

Regarding claim 3, Cuny et al. disclose a ratcheting mechanism (26) to lock the finger actuator in a fixed position, thus locking the functional end in a fixed position (col. 5, ln. 8-12).

Regarding claim 4, Cuny et al. disclose the functional end is free to rotate around the longitudinal axis (col. 6, ln. 46-52; Fig. 2).

Regarding claim 6, Cuny et al. disclose the ergonomic handle has a shape of a pistol grip.

Regarding claim 9, Cuny et al. disclose the functional end is selected from the group consisting of a grasper, scissors, a blade, a laser and a needle holder (col. 3, ln. 38-40).

Regarding claim 10, Cuny et al. disclose the functional end is a grasper (col. 3, ln. 38-40).

Regarding claim 11, Cuny et al. disclose the functional end is scissors (col. 3, ln. 38-40).

Regarding claim 12, Cuny et al. disclose a surgical system operated by a single finger, comprising: an ergonomic handle (16) having an aperture accessible by a single finger of a user, and a finger actuator (the inside surface of the aperture on which pressure is applied to actuate movement; see figure above) accessible through the aperture, the finger actuator being sized and shaped to receive a single finger of a user; an elongated tubular portion (14) extending from the ergonomic handle and having a longitudinal axis, the finger actuator being positioned substantially in line with the longitudinal axis of the tubular portion (at least the top portion of the finger actuator is substantially in line with the longitudinal axis); and a rod (42) functionally disposed within the tubular portion along the longitudinal axis, the rod being coupled

proximally to the finger actuator and coupled distally to a functional end (46, 48), such that bidirectional pressure applied by the single finger to the finger actuator along the longitudinal axis manipulates the functional end in a bidirectional manner in a common direction to the bidirectional pressure (col. 5, ln. 65 -col. 6, ln. 6).

Regarding claim 13, Cuny et al. disclose a ratcheting mechanism (26) to lock the finger actuator in a fixed position, thus locking the functional end in a fixed position (col. 5, ln. 8-12).

Regarding claim 14, Cuny et al. disclose the functional end is free to rotate around the longitudinal axis (col. 6, ln. 46-52; Fig. 2).

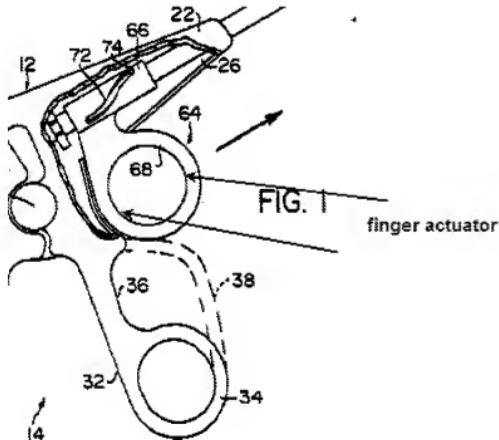
Regarding claim 16, Cuny et al. disclose the functional end is selected from the group consisting of a grasper, scissors, a blade, a laser and a needle holder (col. 3, ln. 38-40).

Regarding claim 17, Cuny et al. disclose the functional end is a grasper (col. 3, ln. 38-40).

Regarding claim 18, Cuny et al. disclose the functional end is scissors (col. 3, ln. 38-40).

3. Claims 19 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Blake (US 5,281,220).

Regarding claim 19, Blake discloses a method of manipulating a surgical instrument with a single finger, comprising the following steps: grasping the surgical instrument with a hand of a user; inserting the single finger of the user into a finger actuator (inside surface of the aperture on which pressure is applied to actuate movement; see figure below) accessible through an aperture (68) of an ergonomic handle of the surgical instrument; moving the single finger in a direction away from the hand, causing operation of a functional end; and moving the single finger in a direction toward the hand, causing operation of the functional end (Figures 1 and 2).



Regarding claim 20, Blake discloses a method of manipulating a surgical instrument with a single finger further comprising the step of rotating the functional end with the single finger (Figures 1 and 2).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 5, 8, and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cuny et al. (US 5,636,608) in view of Livneh (US 5,718,714).

Regarding claim 5, Cuny et al. discloses the claimed invention except for the elongated tubular portion is detachable from the ergonomic handle. Livneh discloses a surgical instrument

having a removable elongated tubular portion (34) provides the advantage providing access to all areas of the instrument for cleaning and sterilization. Additionally, it provides the ability to exchange working handles and functional end members (col. 5, ln. 4-11). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the inventions to make the tubular portion detachable from the handle as taught by Livneh to provide the ability to interchange functional members or handles and to disassemble the instrument for cleaning and sterilization.

Regarding claim 8, Cuny et al. discloses the claimed invention except for the portion of the pistol grip that is substantially out of line with the longitudinal axis is detachable. Livneh discloses a surgical instrument having an elongated tubular portion (34) detachable from the pistol grip which can also be interpreted as a pistol grip detachable from the elongated tubular portion. Livneh suggests that making parts of the instrument detachable from each other provides the advantage providing access to all areas of the instrument for cleaning and sterilization. Additionally, it provides the ability to exchange working handles and functional end members (col. 5, ln. 4-11). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the inventions to make the whole pistol grip (including the portion out of line with the longitudinal axis) detachable from the tubular portion as taught by Livneh to provide the ability to interchange functional members or handles and to disassemble the instrument for cleaning and sterilization.

Regarding claim 15, Cuny et al. discloses the claimed invention except for the elongated tubular portion is detachable from the ergonomic handle. Livneh discloses a surgical instrument having a removable elongated tubular portion (34) provides the advantage providing access to all areas of the instrument for cleaning and sterilization. Additionally, it provides the ability to exchange working handles and functional end members (col. 5, ln. 4-11). Therefore, it would

have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the inventions to make the tubular portion detachable from the handle as taught by Livneh to provide the ability to interchange functional members or handles and to disassemble the instrument for cleaning and sterilization.

6. Claims 1,6, and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cuschieri et al. (US 6,077,286) in view of Goald (US 4,369,788).

Regarding claim 1, Cuschieri et al. disclose a surgical device, comprising: an ergonomic handle (4,3) having a finger actuator (4) configured to receive a single finger of a user; an elongated tubular portion (1) extending from the ergonomic handle and having a longitudinal axis, the finger actuator being positioned substantially in line with the longitudinal axis of the tubular portion; and a rod (6) functionally disposed within the tubular portion along the longitudinal axis, the rod being coupled proximally to the finger actuator and configured to be coupled distally to a functional end (2). Cuschieri et al. fail to disclose the handle having an aperture wherein the finger actuator is accessible through the aperture. Goald discloses a surgical device having a finger ring on the movable handle (40). It would have been obvious to substitute the "finger shackle" (element 41) with a finger ring to provide the same predictable result of preventing the finger bearing against the actuating surface from sliding off.

Regarding claim 6, Cuschieri et al. disclose the ergonomic handle has the shape of a pistol grip (Fig. 3).

Regarding claim 7, Cuschieri et al. disclose a portion of the pistol grip that is substantially out of line with the longitudinal axis can be manipulated into a position that is substantially in line with the longitudinal axis (Fig. 1-3).

Response to Arguments

7. Applicant's arguments filed 10/03/2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. With respect to applicant's argument that Cuny et al. fail to disclose an aperture accessible by a single finger of a user, and a finger actuator accessible through the aperture, the finger actuator being sized and shaped to receive a finger of the user. See discussion in rejections of claims 1 and 12 above. The inside surface of the finger ring, which is taken to be the actuator, is accessed by placing a finger through the aperture. The aperture is sized so that it could receive a finger if so desired.

8. Regarding applicant's argument that Blake fails to disclose a finger actuator accessible through an aperture of an ergonomic handle, see discussions of claim 19 above. The inside surface of the finger ring, which is taken to be the actuator, is accessed by placing a finger through the aperture.

9. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 6, and 7 (Cushieri et al.) have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

10. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event,

however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JENNIFER L. HORNBERGER whose telephone number is (571)270-3642. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday from 8am-5pm, Eastern time.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Todd Manahan can be reached on (571)272-4713. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

jlh
12/29/08

/Todd E Manahan/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3731